

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-05 COME-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 DLOS-05 COA-01 CG-00 DOTE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 0210

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TAGS: MMOL, PINR, IC

SUBJECT: MEDIA COVERAGE CONCERNING RETRIEVAL OF OCEANOGRAPHIC
DEVICE

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION CINCLANT INFO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
FROM COMICEDEFOR FEB 27TH REPEATED TO YOU FOR INFO:

QUOTE

MEDIA COVERAGE CONCERNING RETRIEVAL OF OCEANOGRAPHIC DEVICE-
SITREP TWO.

A. COMICEDEFOR KEFLAVIK IC 242104Z FEB 75 (PASEP)

1. REF A CONTAINS INITIAL SUMMARY OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE
TWO OCEANOGRAPHIC DEVICES WHICH WERE RETRIEVED FROM BEACHES IN
ICELAND AND ARE PRESENTLY IN CUSTODY OF ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE.

A SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE FOR THE PERIOD 24-26
FEB 75 IS CONTAINED IN THIS MESSAGE.

2. MOST SIGNIFICANT NEWSPAPER STORIES AND RADIO-TV REPORTS CONCERN
NEWS RELEASE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) WHICH IS
QUOTED IN FULL BELOW:

"AS THE NEWS MEDIA HAS DISCLOSED, TWO PECULIAR BUOYS HAVE
RECENTLY BEEN FOUND ON THE SOUTH COAST OF ICELAND. IN 1972 AN
IDENTICAL BUOY WAS FOUND NEAR THE WESTMANN ISLANDS.

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"THESE BUOYS APPEAR TO BE LISTENING DEVICES TO CHECK THE
MOVEMENT OF SHIPS AND SUBMARINES AND ARE DESIGNED TO BE ANCHORED

AT EXTREME DEPTHS. THE DEVICES APPEAR TO BE PARTS OF LISTENING SYSTEMS, WHICH ARE LINKED BY ELECTRICAL CABLE WITH LAND STATIONS OR TO SHIPS.

"IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SEE WHERE THE DEVICES IN QUESTION ARE MANUFACTURED BUT MISCELLANEOUS PARTS OF THESE DEVICES APPEAR TO BE OF SOVIET ORIGIN. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHERE FROM THESE DEVICES DRIFTED UPON ICELAND'S SHORES, BUT IDENTICAL DEVICES HAVE BEEN FOUND UPON THE SHORES OF OUR NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES."

3. SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY CHAIRMAN AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERT BENEDIKT GRONDAL WROTE ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN 25 FEB EDITION OF ALTHYDUBLADID. COMPLETE TRANSLATION OF THIS ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

"THE NEWS TO THE EFFECT THAT TWO SOVIET LISTENING DEVICES HAVE DRIFTED UPON THE SOUTH COAST OF ICELAND GIVES US ICELANDERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTERS OF OUR DEFENSE AFFAIRS, A CHAPTER WHICH RARELY HAS BEEN REFERRED TO IN THE EXTENSIVE AND GENERAL DEBATES ON THE DEFENSE AFFAIRS. THIS IS THE FACT, THAT IN THE OCEAN AROUND ICELAND - ALL THE WAY OVER TO GREENLAND AND FROM ICELAND ALL THE WAY OVER TO SCOTLAND - THERE IS A TREMENDOUS NUMBER OF LISTENING DEVICES WHICH THE TWO SUPER POWERS, THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES, HAVE INSTALLED ON THE OCEAN FLOOR TO CHECK ON THE MOVEMENTS OF EACH OTHERS SUBMARINES, GREAT SECRECY HAS ENSHROUDED THESE LISTENING DEVICES. AS AN EXAMPLE THERE HAVE BEEN EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS UPON THE RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRONS MAINTAINED BY THE DEFENSE FORCE IN ICELAND, BECAUSE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO HIDE THE AIRCRAFT, BUT THERE IS NEVER A WORD ABOUT THE EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF LISTENING DEVICES ON THE OCEAN FLOOR, EXTENDING FROM ICELAND TO GREENLAND AND FROM ICELAND TO SCOTLAND. ACCORDING TO THE LATEST AND UNOFFICIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION, PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THERE IS QUITE A BIT KNOWN ABOUT THESE SYSTEMS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE. ALTHOUGH THE INFORMATION IS MORE ABUNDANT ON THE PART OF THE AMERICANS IN THIS, A RECOGNIZED AND A NEUTRAL MILITARY PUBLICATION IN SWEDEN STATES, THAT IT MUST BE ASSUMED THAT OTHER STATES, WHICH HAVE GREAT INTERESTS TO PROTECT AS REGARDS NAVAL WARFARE, "PARTICULARLY THE SOVIET UNION, MAY HAVE INSTALLED A LISTENING DEVICES NETWORK ON THE OCEAN FLOOR IN OCEAN AREAS WHICH THE SOVIET UNION REGARDS AS CRUCIAL TO ITS MILITARY INTERESTS." (QUOTATION FROM THE PEACE INSTITUTE IN STOCKHOLM, YEARBOOK, 1969 - 1970).

THE LISTENING DEVICES WHICH NOW HAVE DRIFTED UPON THE SOUTH COAST
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OF ICELAND APPEAR TO BE CONCRETE EVIDENCE TO THE EFFECT, THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS INSTALLED A NETWORK OF LISTENING DEVICES AROUND THIS COUNTRY, WHICH AGAIN IS A NATURAL EXPLANATION TO THE EXTENSIVE MOVEMENTS BY SOVIET WARSHIPS, MANEUVERS BY THESE AND THEIR MILITARY FLIGHTS AT THIS COUNTRY.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE AMERICANS BEGAN USING LISTENING DEVICES ON THE OCEAN FLOOR IN THE PERIOD FROM 1950 THROUGH 1955. THE AMERICANS HAVE INVESTED QUITE MUCH CAPITAL IN DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY IN THIS CONNECTION, BUT THE RESEARCH HAS PRIMARILY BEEN CARRIED OUT BY WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY.

THESE SYSTEMS ARE GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS SOSUS OR SONAR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM. THESE DO EITHER LISTEN FOR SOUNDS FROM SHIPS ONLY OR THEY TRANSMIT AGAINST THE HULL OF A SHIP AND RECORD THE ECHO ON THE RETURN. QUITE OFTEN THESE LISTENING DEVICES ARE CONNECTED TOGETHER ON A LONG CABLE WHICH REACHES ASHORE, BUT THEN AGAIN THERE ARE VARIOUS TYPES OF INDEPENDENT LISTENING DEVICES IN USE. THE FIRST CONTINUOUS SYSTEM OF THIS NATURE WAS INSTALLED OFF THE EAST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES AND WAS GIVEN THE CODE NAME "CAESAR". SINCE THEN, RAPID PROGRESS HAS TAKEN PLACE AND THE SYSTEM CODE NAMED

"COLOSSUS" SUCCEEDED THE FIRST. THE SECOND SYSTEM HAS FIVE TO FIFTEEN LISTENING DEVICES PER MILE OF CABLE USED. SUCH LISTENING DEVICES ARE QUITE FREQUENTLY ANCHORED ON THE OCEAN FLOOR AND FINALLY SUCH DEVICES AS THESE AND OF VARIOUS SIZES ARE DROPPED FROM AIRCRAFT OR FROM SHIPS WHICH THEN MONITOR TRANSMISSIONS FROM THE DEVICES IN THE SEA. IN ADDITION TO THE AMERICANS HAVING SUCH A SUBMARINE LISTENING DEVICES SYSTEM OFF THEIR SHORES AND THE CANADIANS MAINTAINING SYSTEMS OF THEIR OWN OFF THEIR SHORES, IT IS BELIEVED CERTAIN THAT SUCH SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND IN THE PACIFIC. THE AFOREMENTIONED SWEDISH PUBLICATION REFERRED TO THE AREAS BETWEEN ICELAND AND GREENLAND AND ICELAND AND SCOTLAND FIRST OF ALL SUCH STRATEGIC AREAS AND THE MAGAZINE "SEA TECHNOLOGY" OFFERED, IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE IN 1973, INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT, THAT FROM ICELAND THERE EXTEND LISTENING DEVICES SYSTEMS IN THE SEA BETWEEN ICELAND AND GREENLAND ON THE ONE HAND AND ICELAND AND THE FAROE ISLANDS ON THE OTHER HAND. THE MAGAZINE BELIEVED THIS TO BE THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE GREAT STRESS WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PLACED ON THE DEFENSE FORCE REMAINING IN ICELAND.

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OES-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5187

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THE REASON FOR THE GREAT EMPHASIS PLACED UPON THESE SECRET SYSTEMS OF LISTENING DEVICES BY THE GREAT POWERS IS, THAT THEIR NUCLEAR SUBMARINES CARRY MISSILES ARMED WITH NUCLEAR AND HYDROGEN WARHEADS, WARHEADS WHICH WOULD SUFFICE TO DESTROY MOST CIVILIZATION AND COMPLETELY. THESE SUBMARINES ARE CONSTANTLY ON THE PROWL AND FOR THIS REASON IT IS FOUND EXTREMELY IMPORTANT BY THE GREAT POWERS TO KNOW WHERE THESE SUBMARINES ARE. THE MOST IMPORTANT SEA LANES USED BY THESE SUBMARINES IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN ARE JUST NORTH WEST AND SOUTH EAST OF ICELAND.

THE LIMITED INFORMATION DISCLOSED ON THE SUBMARINE LISTENING DEVICES SYSTEMS IS BOUND TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE ICELANDERS THE IMMENSE STRATEGIC VALUE OF OUR COUNTRY AND THE FACT, THAT THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF ICELAND IS GREATER AND MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN MOST OF US HAVE SUSPECTED. REGARDLESS OF WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO THE DEFENSE FORCE, THE LISTENING DEVICES SYSTEMS OF THE GREAT POWERS WOULD BE MAINTAINED IN ONE OR ANOTHER MANNER RIGHT UP TO OUR BEACHES. IF LITTLE OR NO LISTENING WERE POSSIBLE AT ICELAND'S SHORES, NUCLEAR SUBMARINES WOULD USE THAT "CLEAN" INSHORE ROUTE TO BYPASS THE LISTENING DEVICES SYSTEM OF THE COUNTERPART AND HARDLY WOULD IT BE DESIRABLE FOR US TO HAVE THESE SUBMARINES MOVING ABOUT CLOSE TO OUR SHORES.

AS MATTERS NOW STAND WHERE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE CONCERNED, THE MUTUAL LISTENING DEVICES SYSTEMS ARE NOT ALL EVIL. A NORWEGIAN POLITICIAN WHO VISITED HERE RECENTLY SAID: IT IS DESIREABLE THAT THE GREAT POWERS KNOW AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF EACH

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OTHER. WHEN THE GREAT POWERS DO NOT KNOW WHAT EACH OF THEM IS UP TO, THEY BECOME HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF EACH OTHER AND THIS INCREASES THE DANGER OF A MISTAKE BEING MADE, A MISTAKE WHICH MIGHT PROVE TO BE QUITE FATEFUL.

"MANKIND CONTINUES DREAMING ABOUT DEMOBILIZATION AND A SECURE PEACE. ALTHOUGH THIS APPEARS TO BE A DISTANT DREAM, FAR FROM ABOUT TO COME TRUE, A NORWEGIAN EXPERT HAS POINTED OUT, THAT THE MOST MODERN LISTENING DEVICES SYSTEMS INTENDED TO CHECK ON THE MOVEMENTS OF SUBMARINES, MAY IN THE FUTURE PROVE TO BE INVALUABLE SURVSIPPUNCE SYSTEMS IN THE HANDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THEN TO GUARANTEE THAT THE REGULATIONS ON DEMOBILIZATION ARE ACTED ON."

4. MORGUNBLADID IN 25 FEB EDITION REPORTED 1972 INCIDENT IN

WHICH FISHING BOAT FROM WESTMANN ISLANDS RETRIEVED SOVIET LISTENING DEVICES IDENTICAL TO THE TWO INVOLVED IN CURRENT CONTROVERSY. ACCORDING TO REPORT, 1972 DEVICE WAS TURNED OVER TO ICELANDIC COAST GUARD WHO TRANSPORTED IT TO KEFLAVIK FOR DELIVERY TO THE DEFENSE FORCE. FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT NEITHER HE NOR MINISTER FOR JUDICIAL AFFAIRS OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN, WHO WAS PRIME MINISTER AT THE TIME, KNEW ABOUT THE 1972 DISCOVERY. BALDUR MOLLER, DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY FOR JUDICIAL AFFAIRS SAID "THAT FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THAT PARTICULAR (1972) DISCOVERY HAD GONE STRAIGHT TO KEFLAVIK AIRPORT," AND HE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHY. HE SAID THE COAST GUARD HAD MERELY TRANSPORTED THE DEVICE AT THE REQUEST OF THE DEFENSE FORCE AND HE BELIEVED THIS TO BE THE MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION AS TO WHY NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT THE DISCOVERY OF THAT PARTICULAR LISTENING DEVICE. PETUR SIGURDSSON, DIRECTOR OF THE COAST GUARD TOLD MORGUNBLADID THAT THE COAST GUARD KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE LISTENING DEVICE FOUND IN 1972, OTHER THAN THAT IT HAD CARRIED IT FROM WESTMANN ISLANDS TO KEFLAVIK 28 OCT 72. HE SAID THIS WAS NOT REPORTED BECAUSE THE FISHING LIMITS DISPUTE WITH THE BRITISH WAS GOING ON AT THAT TIME AND THE COAST GUARD NEVER GOT AROUND TO GIVING INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEVICE.

5. MORGUNBLADID IN 26 FEB EDITION REPORTED A LONG SHIELDED CABLE WHICH HAD DRIFTED ASHORE AT EYRARBAKKI. LENGTH OF THE CABLE IS ABOUT 60 FATHOMS AND IT IS ABOUT 10 OR 12 MILLIMETERS THICK. IT WAS ALSO DISCLOSED THAT ANOTHER CABLE WHICH IS BELIEVED TO BE IDENTICAL TO THAT AT EYRARBAKKI DRIFTED ASHORE NEAR HORNAFJORDUR RECENTLY. THIS LENGTH OF CABLE WAS SOME 100 METERS. IN BOTH INSTANCES THE CABLE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TORN LOOSE FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR IN HEAVY SURF.

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6. EFFORTS BY IDF TO OBTAIN CUSTODY OF THE CABLES ARE CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS.

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